

Ashley Barrow

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Media Analysis

U.K. Coverage of Donald Trump's Recent Visit to Middle East

Digital media in the United Kingdom has played a significant role in portraying the image of Donald Trump in both a positive and negative light. Recently, Trump departed from Washington and went on his first foreign trip abroad where he visited Saudi Arabia, Israel, West Bank, Rome, Vatican City, Brussels, and Sicily. Media Outlets in the United Kingdom have covered this recent event in different ways.

Trump is considered a celebrity that was born into it, born with it, and made for it. By definition, a born into it celebrity is an ascribed celebrity – via the bloodline...royalty, and are typically children of big celebrities. Trump's father, Frederick Trump was highly well-known and therefore Trump comes from "old money" and has inherited some of his father's wealth, but this reason alone does not determine his celebrity brand.

Trump also has a very talented, analytical, business mind, therefore he has accumulated much of his wealth from this innate gift of intelligence. Many media outlets argue that he was never a politician and therefore question why he was elected as President of The United States, but he has the talent of thinking through economic problems and global devastations. The stock market has increased more than it ever has before, and this is partially because of Trump's well thought through economic policies.

He has increased several opportunities and jobs that circulate throughout the world. He is also portrayed by some media outlets as being "made for it". There is a reason individuals voted for him to become the President of the United States. Before he ran for the election he had already gained publicity from being well known on his show 'The Apprentice' and his various casinos.

Some media outlets argue that Donald Trump made history. "Donald Trump made history by becoming the first sitting president to visit the sacred Western Wall, vowing to try and secure peace between the Palestinians and Israel" said a source from *The Independent* (McKernan, Buncombe, 2017). Although, others argue that Trump should be looked down upon because it was only his first foreign trip since being elected as President in January.

Various media outlets in the United Kingdom (UK) frame the recent event involving Trump visiting the Middle East in different ways. Sometimes Trump's image is tied into the truth of the facts and what and who to believe is often questioned by the public. The U.K. news outlets take different approaches in understanding Trump as a celebrity.

A correspondent from *The Telegraph* reported that "Mr. Trump made no specific mention of the Israel-Palestinian conflict but Benjamin Netanyahu, the Israel Prime Minister, said his country was committed to the vision of the US president laid in Riyadh (Sanchez, 2017)". This specific source is taking the approach of subjectivism which by definition is celebrity as a reflection of innate talent; it ties in the concept of "charisma". This article reports Trump as the people of Israel seeing him as being very promising toward them. The light is shined on the idea that he will bring peace to them.

A source from *The Guardian* view Trump as very ignorant, rude and non-charismatic as displayed in a recent opinion article. “Trump’s Saudi sojourn, which preceded a brief visit to Israel provided some indications about his approach on international issues, if indeed they can be trusted” (Observer editorial, 2017).

A source from *The Evening Standard* used the headline ‘Donald Trump Awkwardly Bobs Along to Sword Dance in Saudi Arabia’. In this article they focus more on his appearance than they do his actions. This was the main angle of the story and they did not focus on anything more. This has to do with the cult of the surface which is referred to as the importance of appearance in celebrities. Although it is not a physical attribution that the media is referring to such as Trump’s hairstyle or his clothing they are still pointing out how he looked and what he was doing in that moment. The media has an obsession over how Trump is portrayed toward the readers. This headline was the image that was portrayed of Trump even before reading the story and seeing what Trump was trying to accomplish by making a trip to the Middle East.

The Telegraph had a very different approach to their story. The story focuses more on the opportunity that Trump brought to the Middle East and on how he wanted to make peace. A reporter stated, “Mr. Netanyahu stuck an upbeat note at a cabinet meeting on Sunday, telling Mr. Trump that Israel will “receive you with open arms” (Sanchez, 2017). This explanation just goes to show what “The Telegraph” focused on and how they chose to cover an important event that will be marked in history.

The Daily Mail chose to cover Trump’s event in a series of photos and tweets which appeals to the postmodernist audience. This was a very innovative way to go about covering this event because it appeals to more audience and it truly brings the story to life. In the first photo caption it states, “President Donald Trump, pictured with first lady Melania, touched down Saturday in the Middle Eastern country of Saudi Arabia after tweeting about his excitement for his “first big foreign trip” (Martosko, 2017). This is also an ethical way of covering an article because the tweet and the photo caption are real. The tweet is a fact that can be proven and it adds to Trump’s image as a celebrity.

An article from a source from *The Guardian* also used a series of multimedia images and videos, but in a very different way. It portrayed Trump as acting like some kind of a God and better than everyone. They also tied fake news into the mix. The voice of the article was supposed to be comical and lighthearted, but it still hurts the image of Trump and after all the recent tragic terrorist events that have happened in the world recently, I don’t think it was socially or ethically responsible for *The Guardian* to publish an article of this nature.

For example one of the photo captions reads, “What you’re seeing here is a clever optical illusion: it’s not Donald Trump accepting a gold medal from King Salman of Saudi Arabia, it’s a candlestick. Some people see a rabbit. Because Trump doesn’t bow and scrap in Middle Eastern palaces... (Mandel, 2017). Readers were influenced by these photographs alongside photo captions and some even believed the article. This article goes to show how much of an impact media has on celebrity.

The Telegraph focused on the facts of the story and not portraying Trump’s image in a negative light. A source focused on the important aspect of this event by stating, “In a gesture of good will towards Mr. Trump’s peace-making efforts, Mr. Netanyahu also forced through

a series of measures designed to improve life for the roughly 2.5 million Palestinians living in the occupied West Bank (Sanchez, 2017)".

BBC News stuck to the facts in an article about the event, in contrast to the article mentioned above. This article would appeal to a reader who want to read just the facts. "On Monday, Mr. Trump said he had come to reaffirm the unbreakable bond" between the US and Israel and there was a "rare opportunity to bring security and stability and peace" to the region," said a reporter (*BBC News*, 2017).

Based on the four different taxonomies of celebrity, Trump would be considered an elite considering he has a lot of political and economic power. He could also be referred to as an ascribed and achieved celebrity based on the articles. Humans enjoy living vicariously through those other species who are richer, more famous, attractive and desirable than the rest of us. Perhaps some reporters from select media outlets envy Trump not because of his decisions, but because of his upbringing and his talent to be an exceptional business leader. Also by definition, whether through envy, admiration, or decision, celebrity fascination begins as an exercise of what it would be like to live in the celebrity's shoes. Many people must be fascinated by Trump and the media wants to sway those individuals one way or another. Celebrity's fill our appetite for narrative, fundamental human craving or embedded mental structure.

Global capitalism plays a huge part in this society of celebrities. Trump is used as a tool to make us consume and not to revolt. The audience want to read the negative and not the positive story, but there are a select few readers that want to read the positive. Digital media also plays a significant role in today's culture society. All the different angles and ways this one story is covered proves the influence the media has on society as a whole, as well as the impact digital media has on celebrities and politicians.

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